

## 21. Board Direction on Whether to Relocate Growth and Environmental Management (GEM) and the Competitive Site Selection Process

This item seeks Board direction on whether there is a need to relocate the County's Growth and Environmental Management (GEM) offices. If a determination is made to relocate GEM, this item further seeks Board direction on the competitive process for identifying potential relocation sites. (At the February 11<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the Board directed staff to prepare an agenda item to reconsider the Fringe Benefit Building as a relocation site for the GEM building.)

Terry Ryan, 2538 Stonegate Drive, a mortgage banker, stated that he is familiar with property issues and suggested that there was no need to relocate GEM from its current location and the analysis indicates that GEM meets its 20-year space needs.

Rick Bateman, 300 East Park Avenue, representing Jefferson Management, indicated that the current GEM building is a problem building and urged the Board to go through the competitive bid process and approve Option 2.

Commissioner Thaell explained that on July 30<sup>th</sup>, the Board voted to do three things: request the seller of Fringe Benefits to provide architectural renderings for renovation of Fringe Benefit property, at a cost not to exceed \$122 per square foot; 2) develop a sales contract for the Tharpe Street property (at that time it was estimated to have a value of \$1.5 million), 3) identify additional funding to cover potential funding shortfall of \$1.1 million. It was his understanding that Fringe Benefits acted on the direction of the Board and they accomplished the things the Board asked them to do at their expense. Commissioner Thaell indicated that perhaps the County has a moral imperative to pay reimbursement for their direct cost. He also voiced concern that staff does not know what the feasibility of the Tharpe Street building would be after the right of way is taken which could affect the parking area.

\* After a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Thaell moved to continue this item until staff receives further information about the DOT and the County right-of-way needs and requested that staff enter into discussions with the Fringe Benefits Management Company to determine their out of pocket expenses, then consider repaying that amount to them. The motion was declared dead for lack of a second.

Commissioner Rackleff moved and was duly seconded by Commissioner Maloy to approve Option 2: Direct staff to proceed with the competitive process as generally described in this agenda item, including provisions for the exchange of properties, and only consider site proposals from owners and authorized representatives for the sale of an existing facility within the following geographic boundaries: Southern Strategy Area (Attachment #2), Frenchtown/Front Porch (Attachment #3), and the Enterprise Zone (Attachment #4).

Commissioner Proctor moved a substitute motion to approve Option 5: Direct staff to proceed with the competitive process as generally described in this agenda item, including provisions for the exchange of properties, and only consider site proposals from owners and authorized representatives for the sale or lease of an existing facility or proposal for new construction within the following geographic boundaries: Southern Strategy Area (Attachment #2), Frenchtown/Front Porch (Attachment #3,) and the Enterprise Zone (Attachment #4). The motion was declared dead for lack of a second.

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Commissioner Sauls indicated that there may be no need to relocate because of the

uncertainty of the times and the \$1.1 million for repair costs for the GEM building has already been budgeted. She voiced support for Option 1, to direct staff to retain GEM in its current location and not issue a Request for Bids for relocation sites.

Staff indicated that the RFP could be done in-house.

Chairman Grippa indicated, for the record, that he would not support it if the bid comes back for more than \$2.2 million (the \$1.1 million appraised price of the GEM building and the \$1.1 million for the GEM repairs).

Commissioner Proctor explained, for the record, why he would not vote for the motion on the floor. He stated that he does not want to give the impression that staff or citizens are not worthy of a new GEM building and in order to bring the southern strategy area to life, it would require new construction and new transformation - moving into an old building would not bring charge and spark to the southern strategy, front porch area.

The motion on the floor carried 5 - 2 (Commissioners Sauls and Proctor voted in opposition).